SUBJUGATION, DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE IN THE SELECT AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND INDIAN FICTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Introduction:-

The word 'fiction' refers to literature created from the imagination. The Latin word 'fictus', means 'to form' which seems like a good source for the English word 'fiction' since fiction formed in the imagination. In an inclusive sense, fiction is any literary narrative, whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of events that actually happened. In narrower sense, fiction denotes only narrative that are written in prose, and sometimes is used simply as a synonym for the novel. The *Cambridge Advanced Dictionary* defines, "Fiction is a type of book or story that is written about imaginary characters and events and not based on real people and facts". The *Advanced Oxford Dictionary* defines, "Fiction is a type of literature that describes imaginary people and events, not real ones". In short, fiction tends to be written and read primarily for entertainment. There are various kinds of fiction, such as Historical Fiction, Psychological Fiction, Mystery Fiction, Detective Fiction and Science Fiction.

African-American literature immensely flourished after American Civil War. It has begun in the middle of the 19th century with the slave narrative and memoirs. William Wells Brown's book *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter* (1853) is considered to be the first novel by an African American. The most important movement in African-American literature was the "Harlem Renaissance". This movement offered the African-American community an active voice, a way through which an African-American community could first time transport to the America their history, life, culture and afflictions. African-American writer, Zora Neale Hurston (1903–1960), elevated African-American folk culture to an art form. Her most acclaimed classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God (*1937). The prominent male writers such as Richard Wright is best known for his novel *Native Son* (1940), Ralph Ellison, best known novel *Invisible Man* (1952), which won the National Book Award in 1953, and James Baldwin known for his novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953).

African-American literature after 1970s returned to African-American history and focuses on relationships within the African-American community. The bestseller novel was *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976) by Alex Haley. It was perhaps one of the greatest African-American writing of the late twentieth century. During 1970s African-American literature dominated by women writers like Toni Morrison and Alice Walker. Toni Morrison, the first African-American to receive the Nobel Prize for literature. Her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is Song *of Solomon* (1977). Morrison,Walker, and other writers since the 1970s embrace the painful history of African-American slavery. They share a belief that African Americans must own their history in order to understand their lives in the present. The best read African-American fiction are Mildred D. Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Here My Cry* (1976), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979),Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), Terry McMillan's *Mama* (1987), Eric Jerome Dickey's *Friends and Lovers* (1997), Michal Baisden's *The Maintenance Man* (1999), Carl Weber's *Preacher's Son* (2005), Toni Morrison's *Mercy* (2008) and Yaa Gyasi's *Homecoming* (2016).

Indian English Literature emerged immensely in the literary canon after India's independence. Indian writers had written excellent literature in English language across India. The first book written by an Indian in English was *Travels of Dean Mahomet*, a travel narrative by Sake Dean Mohomet published in England in 1793. The first Indian novel *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) was written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhya and edited by Kishori Chandra Mitra. The novel was serialized in 1864 in the weekly periodical. Further Indian famous trio novelists also known as the 'Big Three', Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao are considered to be the pioneers of Indian English fiction. These writers contributed to Indian English fiction extremely. The Indian Diaspora writers such as Salman Rushdie, V.S.Naipaul, Rohinton Mistry, Agha Shahid Ali, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Kamala Markandeya, Meena Alexander, Anita Rao Badami, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri etc. who are of Indian Diasporas contributed more than that of Indian.

The present proposed research is an attempt to find subjugation, discrimination and violence in the select African-American and Indian Fiction in a comparative manner. The select women fiction writers' fiction is based on realistic experiences of women's lives through literature. They wanted to show that subjugation, discrimination and violence affect women's

daily lives in the male dominated society. Women position in every society remained secondary. Many women face sexual abuse, molest and rape. In the African-American and Indian feminist fiction various female issues are discussed realistically, boldly, courageously and extensively. The select fiction such as Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Ramona Lofton or Sapphire's *Push* (1996), Faustina Soosairaj or Bama's *Sangati* (1994) (translated into English by Lakshmi Holmstrom in 2005), Shashi Deshpande's *A Matter of Time* (1996) and Sivakami's *The Taming of Women* (2012),(translated into English by Pritham K. Chakravathy). In these select fictions one can see women's suppression, domestic and sexual violence, discrimination and secondary position of women. The suppression of women is not limited with their house and own men but, other men as well took disadvantages of women's submissiveness.

The main aim of present research is to analyze and interpret the representative issues of women in a comparative manner. In both societies women are ill-treated by patriarchal society. They always face many challenges in their day to day lives. Women often fall prey to inhuman beating, abuses and sexual harassment of men. The patriarchy places women inferior to men and hardly involves them in decision making.

Toni Morrison and Alice Walker replicate their concern in their works with racial, sexual and political issues, particularly with the African-American women's struggle for spiritual and political survival. African-American women in America live in a discriminated life. Alice Walker in her novel *The Color Purple* (1982) highlights the problems of African-American women in their day to day life. Toni Morrison and Alice Walker highly varied and reflect the voices of the women who have faced sexual abuses, violence and discrimination. These two female writers raised various female issues like female subjugation, freedom, equality, sexual abuses and violence. They also explored racism, classism, segregation, feminism and slavery.

In India, women were not only legally enslaved like African-American women in America, but their plight worse than that of the Blake slaves. The monster of separation of both African-American and Indian women was all powerful discrimination among the people on the basis of their castes and race. The women suffer not only being female but also due to economically poor and depending condition. In Indian fiction there is realistic depiction of women struggle, subordinate position, marginalization, caste and cultural discrimination,

humiliation, domestic and sexual violence against women. Bama's *Sangati* (1994), portrays the lives of Tamil Dalit Christian women's oppression. She presents and articulates Indian women's lives in Tamil Nadu. Bama focuses issues of women like: denial of freedom in homes, sexual harassment, domestic violence, women abandoned by their husbands, inequality, loneliness, ignorance, marginalization subordinate status in the family and society. Another Indian women writer Shashi Deshpande's novel *A Matter of Time* (1996), moves beyond feminist concerns. It highlights the image of the middle-class woman sandwiched between tradition and modernity. In the novel the most striking example of silent sufferings of Kalyani who spends nearly forty years in total silence with her husband, Shripati who thus punishes her for losing their son, a male heir. Finally, Sivakami in her novel *The Taming of Women* (2012) portrays Anandhayi, a village woman's predicaments, struggles and silent horrors of sexual harassment that occurs in daily life of Tamil women. The central character in this novel is a victim of patriarchy. She faces physical abuse and sexual coercion.

1.1. Statement of the Problem:-

The present proposed research title is "Subjugation, Discrimination and Violence in the African-American and Indian Fiction: A Comparative Study". It explores gender discrimination perpetrate not only white men but also men of the same race and caste. In human society women are still ill treated by men in every corner of the world. The women suppression is an age old reality for centuries. Women across the world fought for their rights for centuries and succeed but still they face great troubles. The women writers' presented various gender based issues in their fiction realistically.

1.2. Review of Literature:-

The review of literature involves detail literary study in the field of relevant subject. It includes study of African-American and Indian literature. The purposed research surveys African-American and Indian women fiction in a comparative manner. In African-American feminist writing the Black Women are of the center. Angela Davis *Women, Race, and Class* (1981) focuses the history of the Black Women from the period of slavery to the present time. Black Woman have overcome a long suffering and raised her voice boldly and courageously in her writings. Many Black women writers led the Black Feminist Movement**.** However the

significance of their contribution to African-American literature had only been accepted by critics few years back, when many African-American got prominent positions in the international level by winning Pulitzer Prize and Nobel Prize in literature. The miserable condition of African-American women had been depicted in the African-American writings such as, Zola Neal Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Alice Walker's major works: *Meridian* (1976), *Love and Trouble* (1973) and *You Can't Keep a Good Women Down* (1981). Toni Morrison's *The Song of Solomon* (1977), *Mercy* (2008) and *Beloved* (1987), Terry McMillan *Waiting to Exhale* (1992), and other writers fiction deeply concentrate on African-American culture and society.

In Indian feminist fiction, there are sufferings of women, their hardships, social inequality, sexual and domestic harassment of women in day to day lives by men. In recent years Indian Literature is valued at International level and is broadly discuss in various ways. Writers like Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Urmila Pawar, Baby Kamble, Faustina Soosairaj or Bama and Sivakami Palanimuthu etc. got great success in writing. Prominent feminist books are Anita Desai's *In Costody* (1984), Gita Hariharn's Thousand Faces of Night (1992), Bama's *Karukku* (1992), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* (1998), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* (2008). These books discuss various female issues.

1.3. Aims and Objectives of Research:-

The aims and objectives of proposed research are as follows:

1) To investigate women's subjugation, discrimination and violence in a patriarchal society.

2) To analyze the hegemonic power structure in American and Indian society.

3) To study women's daily struggle at familial and social level.

4) To study women's consciousness.

5) To study socio-economic and political injustices against women.

6) To study African- American and Indian women's exploitation, plight and oppression.

7) To critically analyze African American and Indian women's lives and conditions in a comparative manner.

8) To understand the problems of women.

1.4. Rationale of the Study:-

The rationale of this research is to completely concentrate on the subjugation, discrimination and violence in the select African-American and Indian fiction. The select women writers represented suppression against women and how African-American and Indian women are victimized by men and patriarchal society. The Suppression affects women's individual and social development. The rationale of the research is to find the treatment given to socially, economically and politically neglect African-American and Indian women. The present research is an attempt to comment on social evils in Indian and American society.

1.5. Hypotheses:-

The present research focuses on following hypotheses:

1) Subjugation, discrimination and violence are universal against women.

2) Discrimination is the biggest obstacles in the human development.

3) Female subjugation, discrimination and Violence affect women's personal and social development.

4) Female subjugation, discrimination and violence are strongly criticized in the select fiction.

5) Rape is an undeniable fact of human society.

6) Gender discrimination is a unique feature of human society.

7) Women are always the victim of male domination.

1.6. Research Methodology:-

The present research is a comparative study. It uses textual descriptive method of analysis. It comparatively analyzes primary sources. The primary sources include Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Ramona Lofton or Sapphire's *Push* (1996), Faustina Soosairaj or Bama's *Sangati* (1994) (translated into English by Lakshmi Holmstrom 2005), Shashi Deshpande's *A Matter of Time* (1996) *and* Sivakami's *The Taming of Women* (2012), (translated into English by PrithamK. Chakravathy). The research also focuses on complete observation of African-American and Indian women writers' fiction in the perspective of social depressed units. The women characters are represented in the select fiction are socially, politically and economically suppressed in the patriarchal society. Their lives are always in danger and full with many obstacles. They have so many cultural, social, racial, caste and color discriminations. The study is deep observation of characters and find out the real problems. The interrelationship between African-American and Indian feminist fiction are somehow the same. Both Communities women sufferings are little bit different but their sufferings take place due to their subordinate position in the society.

The data for the research study is collected from primary and secondary sources. The data is comparatively analyzed. The primary and secondary sources are as follows.

A. Primary Sources:-

The main primary sources are as follows:

1. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970).

2. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982).

3. Ramona Lofton or Sapphire's *Push* (1996)

4. Bama's *Sangati* (1994),(translated into English by Lakshmi Holmstrom 2005).

5. Shashi Deshpande's *A Matter of Time* (1996)

6. Sivakami's *The Taming of Women* (2012), (Trans. into English by PrithamK.Chakravarthy).

B. Secondary Sources:-

A secondary source is the source that provides non-original or secondhand information. The secondary sources include reference books on African-American and Indian literature. The secondary sources also include biographies and critical studies of an author's works, research papers published in National and International Journals of English Literature and related research dissertations, on shodhganga. Secondary sources as well include E-resources. The secondary sources will be analyzed in Quantitative and Qualitative levels.

1.7. Scope and Limitations:-

The scope of present purposed research study is needed to understand and examine subjugation, discrimination and violence in the select African - American and Indian fiction in a comparative manner. The women characters in selected fiction are faced sexual harassment, physical violence, unequal treatment and discrimination. The select fiction guides us to understand women problems. As women writers they understand women issues rightly. The present proposed research concentrates on Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970); Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Ramona Lofton or Sapphire's *Push* (1996), Bama's *Sangati* (1994), Shashi Deshpande's *A Matter of Time* (1996) and Sivakami's *The Taming of Women* (2012). The limitation of the present purposed research is all other novels of these select writers are excluded from the research. The select women writers others discussed issues like race, classism, sexism, women identity and caste etc. are excluded from research. Finally, the research only explores select issues of African-American and Indian women in a comparative manner.

1.8. The Significance of the Study:-

The proposed research is to focus on subjugation, discrimination and violence of women in a patriarchal society. The main significance of this research is to focus on women's struggle and how they raise their voice against suppression. African-American and Indian women are victimized by their men and society very badly in the universe. This research is an attempt to highlights women issues in a broad way. The research highlights how socially, economically and politically suppressed Indian and African-American women are ill treated in the society for centuries and still such practices are going on in the patriarchal society. For example, in Bama's *Sangati* (1994) women characters work in unorganized sectors where they are badly treated by

their men and upper caste men. The present research is comment on social evils in Indian and American society.

1.9. Tentative Chapterization:-

The present research is divided into following five tentative chapters.

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter is of introduction. It includes concept and definition of comparative study, definition of fiction with a brief history of African-American and Indian fiction. The chapter concludes with biographical information of select women writers.

Chapter Two: Subjugation

The second chapter deals with a female subjugation. It includes a comparative analysis of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Ramona Lofton or Sapphire's *Push* (1996), Bama's *Sangati* (1994), Shashi Deshpande's *A Matter of Time* (1996) and Sivakami's *The Taming of Women* (2012).

Chapter Three: Discrimination

The third chapter discusses discrimination in the Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker *Color Purple* (1982), Ramona Lofton or Sapphire's *Push* (1996), Bama's *Sangati* (1994), Shashi Deshpande's *A Matter of Time* (1996) and Sivakami's *The Taming of Women* (2012). This chapter also deals with how discrimination affect women characters lives.

Chapter Four: Violence

The fourth chapter explores a comparative violence against women in the Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Ramona Lofton or Sapphire's *Push* (1996), Bama's *Sangati* (1994), Shashi Deshpande's *A Matter of Time* (1996) and Sivakami's *The Taming of Women* (2012).

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The fifth and final chapter deals with conclusion and scope for future research. It will sum up findings and a comparative value of the research. Finally the research traces the relevance of subjugation, discrimination and violence in the current context.

Note: The chapterization of the present proposed research is tentative and subject to any later modification recommended by the supervisor.

Note: The synopsis is written in American English.

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